

Message Text

PAGE 01 STATE 288049
ORIGIN NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 R

66011

DRAFTED BY:IO/UNA:BJSHAROP

APPROVED BY:IO/UNCA:AFHOLLOWAY

S/S:FWISNER

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TO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 288049

NODIS

CHEROKEE FOR AMBASSADOR YOUNG FROM UNA

FOLLOWING REPEAT PRETORIA 6374 ACTION SECSTATE NOV 25

QUOTE S E C R E T PRETORIA 6374

NODIS - CHEROKEE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PPDC, PGOV, SG

SUBJECT: VORSTER LETTER TO PRESIDENT CARTER

REF: PRETORIA 5987

SECRETARY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS BRAND FOURIE ASKED DCM
TO CALL AT DFA TODAY, NOV 25, TO RECEIVE A LETTER
FROM PRIME MINISTER VORSTER FOR PRESIDENT CARTER
RESPONDING TO THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER DELIVERED EARLY
THIS MONTH (REFTEL). FOURIE HANDED LETTER OVER SAYING
HE WOULD NOT VENTURE TO COMMENT ON IT. TEXT OF LETTER,

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PAGE 02 STATE 288049

ORIGINAL OF WHICH IS BEING POUCHED, FOLLOWS:

"MR. PRESIDENT,

I AM GLAD THAT YOU TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY OFFERED BY AMBASSADOR
BOWDLER'S RETURN TO SOUTH AFRICA TO WRITE TO ME ABOUT RELATIONS
BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES. I BELIEVE THAT THESE COMMUNICATIONS
BETWEEN US CAN SERVE A USEFUL PURPOSE IN REMOVING MISCONCEPTIONS
AND POSSIBLY AVOIDING THE TAKING OF FAR-REACHING DECISIONS

BASED ON INCOMPLETE FACTS, LEADING NOT ONLY TO A DETERIORATION IN RELATIONS BUT, EVEN MORE IMPORTANT, TO AN INCREASE IN THE DANGERS FACING SOUTHERN AFRICA-ALSO FROM OUTSIDE.

YOU REFERRED TO MY MEETING WITH VICE-PRESIDENT MONDALE AS ONE WHICH YOU HAD HOPED WOULD LEAD TOWARDS AMELIORATION OF THOSE CONDITIONS WHICH PREVENTED BETTER RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR COUNTRIES. WE MUST, HOWEVER, FACE THE FACT THAT OUR PERSPECTIVES OF THOSE CONDITIONS DIFFER.

THE UNITED STATES HAS REPEATEDLY CALLED FOR FULL PARTICIPATION BY ALL THE PEOPLES OF SOUTH AFRICA IN THE POLITICAL PROCESS. IN MY DISCUSSIONS WITH VICE PRESIDENT MONDALE IN VIENNA DURING MAY THIS YEAR I EXPLAINED THAT THERE IS NO MAN WHO HAS NOT GOT THE VOTE AND WHO CANNOT PARTICIPATE IN GOVERNMENT. PERHAPS THEY CANNOT PARTICIPATE IN THE SAME MANNER AS IN THE 51 STATES OF THE UNITED STATES, BUT THEN ONE SHOULD EQUATE THE POSITION OF GUAMESE IN THE UNITED STATES TO THAT OF BLACKS IN SOUTH AFRICA. THE GAUMESE ARE SUBSERVIENT TO THE AUTHORITY OF THE UNITED STATES BUT THEY HAVE NO VOTE IN CONGRESS. FURTHERMORE OUR PRESENT ELECTION IS IN PART BEING FOUGHT TO GIVE MORE MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION TO THE COLOURED AND INDIANS.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 STATE 288049

OVER THE LAST SIX MONTHS WE HAVE BECOME CONVINCED THAT YOUR ADMINISTRATION IS DETERMINED TO IMPOSE UPON SOUTH AFRICA PRESCRIBED FOR THE ARRANGEMENT OF HER INTERNAL STRUCTURE WHICH YOU HAVE FOUND TO BE MOST APPROPRIATE FOR THE UNITED STATES. IT WAS VICE-PRESIDENT MONDALE WHO FIRST STRESSED THAT GOOD RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES WOULD IN FUTURE BE CONTINGENT UPON SOUTH AFRICA MOVING TOWARDS A "ONE-MAN-ONE-VOTE" SITUATION-A THESIS WHICH HAS SUBSEQUENTLY BEEN REITERATED BY SENIOR OFFICIALS OF THE ADMINISTRATION CHARGED WITH THE EXECUTION OF FOREIGN POLICY. FOR EXAMPLE, AT THE WORLD CONFERENCE ON ACTION AGAINST APARTHEID IN LAGOS, AMBASSADOR YOUNG, ON 30TH AUGUST, SAID:-

"IN JUNE OF THIS YEAR OUR VICE PRESIDENT WALTER MONDALE, MET WITH PRIME MINISTER VORSTER TO CONVEY A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT CARTER AND THE ENTIRE UNITED STATES CABINET. HE SAID THAT OUR POLICY TOWARD SOUTH AFRICA IS ROOTED IN A FIRM COMMITMENT TO THE PROGRESSIVE TRANSFORMATION OF SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIETY, TOWARD MAJORITY RULE AND AN END TO APARTHEID. ONLY AS WE WORK TOWARD THAT END, IN AS RAPID AND AGGRESSIVE A MANNER AS POSSIBLE, CAN WE HOPE TO SAVE SOUTH AFRICA FROM THE VIOLENT AND CATASTROPHIC EFFECTS OF CONTINUED APARTHEID."

I NOTE FROM YOUR PRESENT LETTER THAT YOU DID NOT MEAN TO

DICTATE SOLUTIONS TO SOUTHERN AFRICA'S PROBLEMS, BUT RATHER TO EXPLORE HOW WE MIGHT CO-OPERATE TO AVOID RACIAL CONFLICT IN RHODESIA, SOUTH WEST AFRICA AND SOUTH AFRICA. WITHIN THIS FRAMEWORK I WISH TO STRESS THAT THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF DEMOGRAPHY, DEVELOPMENT, CULTURE AND HISTORY OF SOUTH AFRICA ARE VASTLY DIFFERENT FROM THOSE IN THE UNITED STATES. BLACK PEOPLE IN AMERICA IDENTIFY THEMSELVES WITHIN THE EXISTING WHITE-ORDERED SOCIETY, HAVING NO SEPARATE NATIONAL AFFILIATIONS. IN SOUTH AFRICA, DESPITE MODEST ATTENUATION OF THEIR GROUP CONSCIOUSNESS AND SENTIMENT IN THE CITIES, BLACK PEOPLE, AS IS THE CASE ALL OVER AFRICA, HAVE VERY CLEAR

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 STATE 288049

NATIONAL AFFILIATIONS, BASED ON THEIR DISTINCT CULTURAL, HISTORICAL, GEOGRAPHICAL AND LINGUISTIC CHARACTERISTICS.

SOUTH AFRICA'S POLICY IS IN FACT DESIGNED TO DEVELOP A VIABLE AND JUST RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HER PEOPLES AND TO ESTABLISH A POLITICAL AND SOCIAL DISPENSATION IN WHICH ALL WILL PLAY THEIR PART FULLY AND FREELY. I SINCERELY HOPE THAT THE UNITED STATES WILL SOME DAY FIND IT POSSIBLE TO RECOGNISE THAT THERE MAY BE MORE THAN ONE WAY OF ACCOMPLISHING THIS, AND TO AGREE THAT LOCAL CONSIDERATIONS, EXPERIENCE AND HISTORY MUST IN THE INTEREST OF THOSE CONCERNED OUTWEIGH THEORIES AND PRINCIPLES EMANATING FROM ABROAD.

IN THE THIRD PARAGRAPH OF YOUR LETTER DEALING WITH RHODESIA AND SOUTH WEST AFRICA, YOU REFERRED TO YOU HOPE THAT "PARALLEL PROGRESS MIGHT ALSO BE MADE ON RESOLVING THOSE ISSUES WHICH HINDER DEVELOPMENT OF A VIABLE AND JUST RELATIONSHIP AMONG THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH AFRICA". DURING A RECENT VISIT BY OUR SECRETARY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS TO WASHINGTON, HE UNDERSTOOD IN THE COURSE OF INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS AT THE STATE DEPARTMENT, THAT THE USE OF THE TERM "PARALLEL PROGRESS" WAS NOT INTENDED TO CONNOTATE THAT IN THE VIEW OF THE UNITED STATES WHAT NOW HAPPENS IN RHODESIA AND SOUTH WEST AFRICA MUST ALSO TAKE PLACE IN SOUTH AFRICA. A CONFIRMATION OF THIS UNDERSTANDING WOULD BE USEFUL.

IN THE FOURTH PARAGRAPH OF YOUR LETTER IT IS STATED THAT THE GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES HOPE THAT THE ACTIONS TAKEN ON OCTOBER 19 "WILL BE RECONSIDERED AND REVERSED." I FEAR THAT THERE HAS BEEN A GREAT DEAL OF MISUNDERSTANDING ABOUT THESE ACTIONS. WHAT WAS AT STAKE WAS THE MAINTENANCE OF LAW AND ORDER, TO ENABLE THE GOVERNMENT TO PROCEED WITH THE PROGRESSIVE INSTITUTION OF EVOLU-

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 05 STATE 288049

TIONARY CHANGES ALREADY PLANNED. OCTOBER 19 SHOULD IN NO SENSE BE SEEN AS CONSTITUTING A REVERSAL OF THE POLICY OF EVOLUTIONARY CHANGE IN THE INTEREST OF ALL THE PEOPLES OF SOUTH AFRICA. THIS POLICY WILL CONTINUE TO BE PURSUED, BUT SUCCESSFULLY IMPLEMENTED AND INDEED ACCELERATED. THE ACTIONS TAKEN ON OCTOBER 19 CAN BE REVERSED ONLY TO THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH GAVE RISE TO THESE ACTIONS HAVE BEEN CORRECTED. THESE CIRCUMSTANCES INCLUDE INCITEMENT AND PLANS FOR INTIMIDATION, WHICH IN THEMSELVES HAVE GATHERED STRENGTH AND VOLUME FROM THE CRITICISMS AND PRESSURES APPLIED VIS-A-VIS THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT FROM COUNTRIES, INCLUDING THE UNITED STATES, WHICH DE FACTO AND DE JURE, EXERCISE NO RESPONSIBILITY WHATSOEVER FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF INTERNAL ORDER AND WHICH HAVE NO INTENTION OF ASSUMING SUCH RESPONSIBILITY.

YOU ALSO URGE ME TO LEAD MY GOVERNMENT TOWARD A POLITICAL AND SOCIAL SYSTEM IN WHICH ALL OUR PEOPLE MAY TAKE PART FULLY AND FREELY. THIS, HOWEVER, IS NOT AN OBJECTIVE WHICH, BY THE EXERCISE OF EXTERNAL PRESSURE BOTH PUBLICLY AND PRIVATELY, IS BEING URGED UPON ANY OTHER STATE IN THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY OF NATIONS. IT IS ONLY SOUTH AFRICA WHICH IS BEING SINGLED OUT IN THIS RESPECT. IT IS, ON THE OTHER HAND, THE OBJECTIVE OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT TO REGAIN AND DEVELOP WITHIN THE SOUTH AFRICAN FRAMEWORK "MANY VALUES OUR TWO PEOPLES HOLD IN COMMON." BUT IF A POLICY IS FOLLOWED VIS-A-VIS SOUTH AFRICA OF PUNITIVE ACTION AND IMPOSITION OF SANCTIONS, THE RETENTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THESE VALUES, FAR FROM BEING FACILITATED, ARE RENDERED INFINITELY MORE DIFFICULT, AND THE OBJECTIVE WHICH IS URGED ON THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT BECOMES IMPOSSIBLE OF ATTAINMENT, SINCE CONFRONTATION THEREBY BECOMES VIRTUALLY UNAVOIDABLE AND CONFRONTATION EXTERNALLY CAN ONLY STIMULATE CONFRONTATION INTERNALLY.

NOT ONLY FROM YOUR LETTERS BUT ALSO BECAUSE OF YOUR GENERAL

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 06 STATE 288049

INTEREST IN HUMAN RIGHTS, I TAKE IT THAT YOU ARE CONCERNED WITH THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF ALL PEOPLES, INCLUDING THOSE OF SOUTH AFRICA. YOU MAY REST ASSURED THAT MY GOVERNMENT IS CONTINUALLY STRIVING TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF ALL SOUTH AFRICANS. WE ARE, FOR EXAMPLE, EMBARKING ON A NEW PROGRAMME OF PROVIDING BETTER AND ADDITIONAL HOUSING, AT GREAT EXPENSE, FOR SOUTH AFRICA'S URBAN BLACK POPULATION. CONSIDERABLE AMOUNTS WILL BE SPENT IMPROVING FACILITIES ALSO IN SOWETO. IT HAS OCCURRED TO ME THAT YOU MAY WISH TO CONSIDER URGING AMERICAN FIRMS OPERATING IN THE REPUBLIC TO MAKE A SPECIAL EFFORT TO ASSIST THESE PROGRAMMES. POSSIBLY YOUR ADMINISTRATION MAY EVEN WISH TO CO-OPERATE IN REALISING THESE PROJECTS.

YOU ALSO REFER TO THE QUESTIONS OF RHODESIA AND SOUTH WEST AFRICA. IN MY LETTER OF 12 OCTOBER 1977 I GAVE AN EXPOSITION OF WHERE WE STAND IN REGARD TO THESE MATTERS AND WHAT OUR COMMITMENTS ARE. I HAVE NO INTENTION OF GOING BACK ON THESE COMMITMENTS.

HOWEVER, AS YOU KNOW, THE SERIOUS OBSTACLES STILL TO BE OVERCOME ARE BASICALLY NOT MATTERS RELATING TO FUNDAMENTAL CONSTITUTIONAL PRINCIPLE, BUT RATHER FROM THE ASPIRATIONS OF CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS, WITH OUTSIDE BACKING, TO FIND WAYS AND MEANS OF SECURING GOVERNMENTAL POWER THROUGH MEANS OTHER THAN FREE ELECTIONS-FREE FROM INTIMIDATION. IF THEY WERE ALLOWED TO SUCCEED, THE SOVIET UNION WOULD HAVE PENETRATED EVEN FURTHER INTO SOUTH AFRICA. I CANNOT BECOME ASSOCIATED WITH ANY ARRANGEMENT THAT WOULD LEAD NOT TO MAJORITY RULE BUT SUCH A SPECIAL TYPE OF DICTATORSHIP. THIS WOULD ROB THE PEOPLES CONCERNED OF THEIR INHERENT RIGHT OF SELF-DETERMINATION.

YOU INDICATED, MR PRESIDENT, THAT THE SPIRIT IN WHICH YOU

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 07 STATE 288049

HAD WRITTEN TO ME WAS A CONSTRUCTIVE ONE AND THAT YOU DID NOT SEEK THE DESTRUCTION OR PUNISHMENT OF ANY GROUP IN SOUTH AFRICA. I APPRECIATE THIS, AND I WONDER WHETHER WE SHOULD NOT TRY TO EXAMINE AND IDENTIFY AREAS OF AGREEMENT AND BUILD ON THESE AREAS OF AGREEMENT RATHER THAN EMPHASISE THE EXTENT OF OUR DIFFERENCES.

THE CREATION OF A CLIMATE OF MUTUAL CONFIDENCE MIGHT BE THE FIRST PRIORITY. A PRE-REQUISITE TO THIS MIGHT BE A COOLING-OFF PERIOD TO ENABLE THE HIGHLY EMOTIONAL TENSIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN GENERATED ON EITHER SIDE TO BE RELAXED. IF THIS COULD BE DONE, WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO START EARLY IN THE NEW YEAR ON A COURSE DIRECTED TOWARDS BUILDING ON AREAS OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN US. THIS IN MY OPINION WILL IN TURN PROGRESSIVELY DIMINISH AREAS WHERE WE DIFFER IN OUR APPROACH AS TO THE MANNER IN WHICH BEST TO RESOLVE THE PROBLEMS OF SOUTHERN AFRICA.

YOURS SINCERELY

B J VORSTER"

BOWDLER. UNQUOTE VANCE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 22-Sep-1999 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESIDENT, FOREIGN RELATIONS, CAT-C, CHEROKEE 11-25-77, DIPLOMATIC
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 02-Dec-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977STATE288049
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter:
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: 11652 GDS
Errors: n/a
Expiration:
Film Number: N770008-0518
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
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Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t197712111/baaaeunr.tel
Line Count: 266
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, TEXT ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 66f35dfc-c188-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN NODS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 01-Dec-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 119033
Secure: LOCK1
Status: NATIVE
Subject: VORSTER LETTER TO PRESIDENT CARTER
TAGS: PPDC, PGOV, SG, (CARTER, JIMMY), (VORSTER, BALTHAZAR JOHANNES)
To: USUN N Y
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/66f35dfc-c188-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009